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CURRENT MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

WILLIAM BENNETT MUNRO

A movement for the creation of the Metropolitan Boston has gained considerable headway during the past year. Municipal Boston, as the recent census returns showed, contains a population of 670,585; but the municipalities located around the city contain among them a population of 1,423,429. In this outer area there are in all thirty-nine cities and towns each one of which is, however, within a radius of twelve or fifteen miles from the center of Boston itself. The area of the proposed Metropolitan Boston would be 417 square miles, whereas the present area of New York is 327 square miles. The movement was inaugurated by the Boston Chamber of Commerce, but it was quickly taken up by business bodies in the surrounding communities and the fulfilment of the project has been strongly recommended to the Legislature by Governor Foss in his inaugural address. It is not proposed that these outlying municipalities should be annexed to Boston but rather that there should be created, for the whole district, a municipal federation. The organ of this federation would be a large council which would have various general powers, some of them final but most of them merely advisory. Each municipality within the federation would retain for the most part its present local powers. All the details of the scheme have not yet been fully worked out, but the matter is engaging the attention of the Legislature, and it is not unlikely that some definite action will be taken during its present session.

The Municipal Association of Cleveland has secured the consent of a number of prominent citizens to give addresses before church clubs, improvement associations, and other organizations, on subjects relating to municipal government and administration. The addresses are to be delivered without charge and will be illustrated, the slides being provided by the Association, through arrangements which it has made with a stereopticon company. The Association has issued a pamphlet giving the names of forty-eight subscribers who have consented to share in this form of public service.

The Intercollegiate Civic League, which is a federation of the political clubs, municipal government clubs, and similar organizations in a score or more of American colleges, has published a bulletin containing brief lists of references on present day political problems, particularly those connected with municipal affairs. The Secretary of the League is Mr. E. M. Sait of Columbia University.

An interesting article on "Düsseldorf: A Study in City Planning and Government," by Frederick C. Howe, appeared in the December number of *Hampton's Magazine*.

Prof. Albert Bushnell Hart of Harvard University has been chosen chairman of the Executive Committee of the National Municipal League in succession to Mr. Horace E. Deming of New York.

A new edition of Léon Morgand's *La Loi Municipale* has been issued from the press of Messrs. Berger-Levrault et Cie, of Paris. This is the eighth edition of the well-known treatise on the municipal code of the French Republic. Mention should also be made of an important new book on *L'Organisation Municipale de Paris*, by E. Maître (Paris, Rousset, 1910). A work on *Gemeindefinanzen* by O. Most has come from the press of Duncker und Humblot at Leipsic. The same publishers have issued Prof. Josef Redlich's short study entitled *Das Wesen der österreichischen Kommunalverfassung*.

The Kansas City Charter of 1908 provides that all positions in the municipal services, with the exception of a small exempt list, shall be filled by competitive examination. This requirement was made applicable to those in office at the time the charter provision went into effect, thus giving outsiders an opportunity to compete for any civil service position. The charge against the civil service that it is academic, theoretical and impractical is met in Kansas City by placing the examinations under the supervision of committees, made up of prominent citizens—bankers, manufacturers, railroad superintendents, etc. These committees draft the questions and grade the personal qualifications of the candidates; for a part of each examination consists of an oral quiz on training, experience, and general knowledge. Since April the Commission has examined some 1200 applicants and created about 100 eligible lists. The new system has made many firm adherents among the best citizens of the city.

The Chicago Civil Service Commission has issued a Civil Service Text Book, the purposes of which, as stated by the Commission in the foreword, are (1) "to dispel the mistaken idea that examinations consist of academic tests"; (2) to enlighten the public in the methods and procedure of civil service administration; and (3) to furnish useful information to prospective applicants. The book contains statements of methods of procedure, standards of examinations, medical and physical tests, types and examples of examinations, and other information of a like nature.

The voters of Detroit at the last election adopted over the heads of the council an amendment to the city charter providing for the inauguration of civil service rules. The new Michigan constitution permits municipal home rule. Under the general municipal incorporation acts, passed by the legislature in pursuance of the constitutional provision, a civil service amendment was submitted to the city council. The council having refused to allow the amendment to go before the people in its original form, a petition of twenty per cent of the total vote cast at the last election for all candidates for mayor, was secured, to force the referendum of the measure. The result of the vote was 19,130 for, and 6,085 against civil service.

An amendment to take over the street railway system of Detroit was rejected by the council, but 18,000 voters signed a referendum petition. A temporary injunction was secured to prevent the submission to the people, but the lower court held that it had no jurisdiction until the actual passage of the amendment. The decision of the Supreme Court is awaited with interest.

The voters of San Francisco at the recent election adopted charter amendments for (1) initiative and referendum, (2) submission to popular vote of all grants or renewals of public utility franchises, (3) the printing of a declaration of political principles of one hundred words opposite the name of a candidate on the ballot, (4) the elimination of the party circle at the head of the ballot and the rotation of names of candidates, (5) the establishment of a free public employment agency, and (6) an eight-hour day and a wage of three dollars for laborers on the public works.

In a recent bulletin of the Federated Civic Societies of Milwaukee, announcement is made of a list of speakers who will address the neigh-

neighborhood civic clubs of the city. The personnel of the list includes public officials, ministers, and university professors, all of whom have volunteered their services. The topics lie, for the most part, in the fields of economics, sociology, and politics. The civic centre movement in Milwaukee is making rapid headway through the inspiration of Mr. Edward J. Ward, who formerly did so much along the same lines for Rochester.

At the recent meeting of the National Municipal League, held at Buffalo, a report was presented by the committee on school extension. The appointment of the committee grew out of an address made by Mr. Edward J. Ward at the 1909 meeting of the League, showing the advances of Rochester in civic centre development. The report, in brief, advocates the use of public school buildings as social and civic centres for the generation of neighborhood spirit and the furtherance of open and non-partisan discussion of the civic problems. The following topics will indicate the tenor of the document: (1) the public school building as non-partisan headquarters; (2) the relations of the civic use of school buildings to public service; (3) the public school building as a local health office; (4) the public school building as a branch public library; (5) the public school building as a free lecture centre; (6) the relation between the social centre and the home; and (7) the relation of the social centre to the church.

The Civic League of St. Louis is organizing a Junior League among the school children of the city, the purpose being to arouse civic interest among children and to accomplish some practical work in the direction of a clean city. The Civic League is making great efforts to increase its membership among all classes of the community with the object in view of greater efficiency. To that end the League began December 12th the publication of a bi-weekly bulletin.

In response to petitions adopted by a number of organizations and signed by 500 citizens, Mayor William A. Magee of Pittsburgh has promised to make public the annual city budget on December 15th, nearly two months before the time when the annual appropriations must be made. The items of the budget are to be properly segregated and the fullest opportunity afforded for examination and discussion.

The Pittsburgh Civic Commission has a firm of accountants at work studying the bookkeeping and auditing systems of all city departments. The results of the investigation of the controller's office have been published in a pamphlet, the first of a series, under the title, "Business Efficiency for Pittsburgh."

A vigorous campaign is in progress in Pittsburgh for a new city charter. The proposed plan, in some respects following the new Boston charter, provides for a council of nine members, elected at large for four years and at a salary of \$6500. The referendum, initiative and recall are incorporated in the plan. Other features are a non-partisan ballot and nomination by petition. The office of mayor and its duties and powers remain as at present.

A committee of the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce, with Dr. A. R. Hatton as chairman, has reported a draft of a bill to be submitted to the next Ohio General Assembly, the purpose of which is to prevent the enlargement of the City Council of Cleveland. The present body has thirty-two members, but the publication of the census returns will bring the membership automatically up to forty-four. The committee believes that development in municipal government should be in the direction of simplicity and that an increase in the City Council would have the contrary effect.

The Cleveland City Council has recently passed an ordinance granting the East Ohio Gas Company a franchise for the supply of both natural and artificial gas, the former at thirty-one cents per thousand feet and the latter at seventy-five cents. The franchise is to run twenty-five years, but there may be a readjustment of charges at the end of ten years. The Company is obliged to make extensions under specified conditions and agrees by acceptance of the franchise to provide increasing quantities of natural and artificial gas, corresponding to the growth and development of the city. All the operations of the Company in the streets of the city are subject to strict supervision of the city authorities designated for the purpose, as also the quality of the gas furnished, inspection of meters and other details. The Company has refused to accept the franchise to furnish artificial gas at seventy-five cents and has formally threatened to discontinue service January 17th unless concessions are made in the direction of a higher rate of charge. The feasibility of municipal ownership and operation is being discussed.

At the last election in Illinois, the voters endorsed by a very large majority the three recommendations of the Peoria Conference, viz., (1) the extension of the merit system to the civil services of the State and Cook County; (2) the enactment of a corrupt practices law; and (3) the adoption of the initiative and referendum. The Civil Service

Reform Associations of the State and Cook County are engaged in drafting measures to carry out the will of the people as expressed in the "Little Ballot." A large majority of senators and representatives are pledged to vote for the civil service reform bills.

The Boston City Council recently adopted an ordinance which consolidated into a new Department of Public Works the three existing departments which have had to do with city construction work. These are the City Engineer's office, the Streets Department, and the Water Department. Mr. Louis K. Rourke, Superintendent of Streets, has been named Commissioner of Public Works and will have entire charge of the new department, which now includes streets, water, sewers, lighting, bridges and ferries.

The sixteenth annual meeting of the National Municipal League was held at Buffalo, N. Y., on November 14 to 17 inclusive. The program presented was one of more than usual interest and attractiveness, and the meetings were well attended. The address of the President, Hon. Charles J. Bonaparte, was entitled "Patriotism in Municipal Affairs" and dealt with the methods of developing citizen activities. Hon. William Dudley Foulke, the League's new president, presented a paper on "Conservation in Municipalities," dealing particularly with the merits of various forms of city expenditure. Among other papers which attracted more than passing attention were those of Dr. Horace E. Flack on "Municipal Reference Libraries"; Dr. W. F. Willoughby on "The Correlation of Financial and Physical Statistics of Cities"; Prof. C. E. Merriam on "The Chicago Commission on City Expenditures"; Dr. Ernest S. Bradford on "A Comparison of Commission Forms of Government"; Harvey S. Chase on "Municipal Budgets and Balance Sheets"; and the annual review of municipal happenings for the year given by Hon. Clinton Rogers Woodruff, Secretary of the League. These papers will be published very shortly in the organization's annual volume of Proceedings.

The Cincinnati Bureau of Municipal Research has printed a pamphlet containing a summary of its first year's work, also several reports dealing with the materials and methods of street pavements.

An interesting step in the work of endeavoring to suggest improved methods of municipal administration through skilled research is an-

nounced in Hoboken, N. J., where Mrs. Robert Livingstone Stevens has given, in memory of her late husband, a fund yielding an income of \$4,000 per year to be administered for the benefit of that city by the New York Bureau of Municipal Research. Mention may also be made, in a like connection, of the offer recently made by Hon. Herman A. Metz of New York to provide \$10,000 per year for three years to be used in the educational work necessary to bring the methods of municipal accounting in the United States upon something like a uniform basis. This fund will also be administered by the New York Bureau of Municipal Research in cooperation with the National Association of Comptrollers and Accounting Officers, and similar organizations.

The Prussian Government has drawn a bill providing for the consolidation of Berlin with its surrounding municipalities into a Greater Berlin. The population of the new metropolis will be about three and a half millions. The system to be adopted is in a general way similar to that of the administrative county of London, the chief organ of the whole area being an elective council of about one hundred members of whom only one-third will be chosen from the city proper although this area includes nearly three-fifths of the whole population. This provision is rather obviously aimed to reduce the Social-Democratic influence in metropolitan affairs. The powers of the council, as proposed by the bill, will be much less extensive than those exercised by its London prototype, being confined to matters of transportation, parks, and building regulations.

The Municipal Library of Buda Pesth has issued a two-hundred page *Catalogue systématique de socialisme municipal*. The issue is the third in a series of bibliographical publications relating to city affairs.

A *Cyclopædia of American Government*, edited by Prof. A. C. McLaughlin of the University of Chicago and Prof. Albert Bushnell Hart of Harvard University is expected to appear from the press of Messrs. D. Appleton and Company, during the course of the current year. It will be issued in three large volumes and will contain articles covering all phases of municipal government.

A very successful historical pageant, entitled "Cave Life to City Life" was recently undertaken by Boston. The various stages in the growth of a great city were portrayed; several thousand persons,

including children drawn from the schools of the city and suburbs, taking a share in the various scenes.

The City Council of Milwaukee has appropriated \$25,000 for the establishment and maintenance, until the year 1912, of a Bureau of Economy and Efficiency. This Bureau has been patterned after the Pittsburgh Survey and its general work was outlined by Prof. John R. Commons, who has been engaged to undertake the project. Since the amount of money available is inadequate for all the investigations first proposed, it is to be devoted exclusively to building up a system of cost-keeping designed to promote the economy and efficiency of municipal departments. In addition to this the coöperation of other agencies has been secured for more effective administration along the following lines: (1) Inspection and enforcement of housing laws and ordinances. (2) Infant mortality and the milk supply. (3) Accidents to workingmen. (4) Wage-exemption and garnishment laws. (5) Boys engaged in street trades. (6) House registration of tuberculosis.

In developing the municipal cost-system preliminary investigations have been had: First, on the legal side, where there have been prepared digests of the legal relationships, powers, and duties coming from the city charter and ordinances, to show the status of each official and the activity required in each line of municipal authority. Second, a study has been made of organization and administration *in general*, with charts showing not only the lines of authority and particular duties of every branch of administration, but of every department with respect to the duties of each employee. A particular study has been made of the general practice of the Comptroller's office as compared with the organization of private corporations, especially of railroads. And, finally, the organization and administration *by departments* has been taken up, as to accounting and business procedure, mechanical efficiency, wastes and losses, and the staffs. Thus the results of the preliminary investigation, by means of charts and the accompanying legal digests, are intended to show graphically the relative position and authority and the work actually performed by each man, and, in this way, how thoroughly a department is organized and what changes should be made for the most effective distribution of responsibilities. The charts as to business methods show how effective and economical are the means as compared with the mechanical results secured. In this manner costs may be taken for any unit of time, so that, at the end of a month, say, results may be compared with those of any other month and thus

show advance or decline in efficiency, the presence of dishonesty, or particular inefficiency, or especially good results, and the exact time and place where these may have occurred. These general results, in turn, can be compared directly with the results of similar undertakings under private ownership or in other cities, and in this way the experience of one city in a particular direction may be a benefit to other cities. This is of especial value since coöperative methods have been established between a number of cities (including New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, St. Paul, Cincinnati, and San Francisco) which are undertaking similar work at the same time, and a fund of \$30,000 has just been given by former Comptroller Metz of New York City to make this coöperation as effective as possible.

In Milwaukee the work has certain advantages, since it is inaugurated by the city administration itself with full official coöperation and assistance; the Comptroller and Deputy Comptroller have already reorganized their work according to the best business practice; and it has the active coöperation of the State Railroad Commission, the Tax Commission, and the Extension Department of the State University, as well as its engineering and accounting experts. Therefore the work can be carried on with less expense than in other cities and will be completed in a shorter time. Milwaukee is expected, for this reason, to furnish a model for the investigations of other cities, and the work there is being carried forward at a more rapid pace not only by its own investigators and coöperating agencies, but by the active assistance of experts from other cities. One municipal department is being taken up at a time, beginning with the water and public works department, and the improved system is to be installed piecemeal.

The following is a brief summary of the recent Illinois law permitting the cities of that state to adopt the commission form of city government.

The act applies to cities not exceeding two hundred thousand in population.

When petitioned for by electors equal in number to one-tenth of the vote cast for the mayor in the last preceding election, the county judge shall have a vote taken.

. . . If the proposition to adopt the commission form be adopted, then on the third Tuesday of April and quadriennially thereafter a mayor and four commissioners shall be elected from the city at large.

Candidates for the office of mayor or of commissioner are to be nominated at a primary election to be held the second Tuesday in March

preceding the date of the election. The two candidates receiving the highest number of votes for mayor are nominated, and the eight candidates receiving the highest number of votes for commissioners are nominated. Each elector casts one vote for each officer.

Three constitutes a quorum of the city council formed by the mayor and four commissioners. The yeas and nays are to be recorded on every vote. The mayor has no veto power.

To the council are given all powers and duties, legislative and executive, now exercised by the mayor, city council, city clerk, city attorney, city treasurer, city comptroller, etc., except that the Board of Local Improvements remains a separate and distinct body.

This power and authority is to be divided and distributed among five departments as follows: Public Affairs, Accounts and Finances, Public Health and Safety, Streets and Public Improvements, Public Property.

The council distributes the power, authority and duties among these five departments by its own ordinance, except that the mayor is always commissioner of the Department of Public Affairs.

The Illinois Civil Service Act of 1895 is to remain operative where it has been adopted by cities previous to the adoption of the commission form of city government.

Salaries of commissioners are not high. For instance, in cities of 5,000 to 10,000 the mayor is to be paid \$600 and the four commissioners \$400 each per annum.

The council is to meet once a week. Meetings are to be public. Any appropriation of money is to be on file with the city clerk for one week before passage.

Franchises for public service utilities must be approved by a majority of the electors.

Members of the council may not be interested in city contracts.

Election and primary expenses of the officers must be published in a daily newspaper with a sworn statement of all campaign expenses and the contributors to his campaign fund.

Each month an itemized statement of the city's finances is to be published, and an annual examination of the books of the city is to be made and published.

Every incumbent of an elective office is subject to recall and removal at an election to be held on petition of 75 per cent of the voters. If the incumbent whose recall is sought shall resign within five days after the petition for recall has been filed, then the council may appoint his suc-

cessor and the election will not proceed. Otherwise an opponent is to be chosen at a primary election. No recall petition shall be filed against an officer who has not been in office for twelve months. No officer who has been recalled may be appointed or elected to office within one year.

The initiative is secured by provision for a petition of 25 per cent of the voters asking that an ordinance be either passed by the council or submitted to the people.

Except in cases of emergency, no ordinance passed by the council shall go into effect for thirty days. In this period a petition by 10 per cent of the electors can suspend the operation of the ordinance and demand either that the council repeal the ordinance or submit it to the people for approval.

Any city which has adopted the commission form of city government must continue under this form for four years, after which time it may return to the old system in much the same manner as it adopted the new.

There is in Illinois a considerable agitation for the adoption of the commission form of government as provided for in the foregoing act of the legislature of that State. Springfield, Champaign, Quincy, Kewanee, Joliet, Monmouth, will all vote on the issue of its adoption. Galesburg, Moline, Jacksonville, Peoria, and Rock Island, are in the midst of the preliminary discussion on the question. The *Chicago Tribune* is advocating the commission form of government for that city, though at present it is outside the provisions of the law.

The city of Seattle is making use of the recall provision in its charter. It thus follows in the wake of Los Angeles, which, though not under the commission form of government, has the recall provision in its laws. The recall in Seattle is being directed against the mayor who is charged with permitting gambling and other vice to be conducted by syndicates which paid for their privileges. Over eleven thousand names appear on the recall petition and the election must be held within forty days' time.

Among the subjects receiving special attention at the recent annual meeting of the National Municipal League at Buffalo, November 14-18, 1910, was the question of the desirability of the League undertaking the formulation of a program of municipal administration analogous to its Municipal Program prepared ten years ago. That program dealt primarily with the problems of the political organization of cities. The

last ten years have witnessed a great development of interest in the subject of municipal administration as distinct from that of municipal government. Notable efforts are being made, not only by the officials of certain cities but by such bodies as Bureaus of Municipal Research, Finance Commissions, and the like, to improve the administrative organizations and purely business methods of municipalities. Especially has the movement for the adoption by the cities of the most approved principles and methods of accountancy and cost-keeping gained great headway. With some reservations, the question of municipal reform may be said to have passed beyond the stage of the discussion of problems of political organization and to have entered that of the consideration of the means for securing good administration. Here too the stage of general discussion has been passed and the really important points are ones of technical details.

In the Municipal Program of ten years ago the League rendered an invaluable service in definitely formulating and concretely expressing in a formal document the best thought regarding the provisions that should be made in respect to the political character and powers of municipalities. At the Buffalo meeting referred to, the question was raised, in a paper delivered by Mr. W. F. Willoughby, Assistant Director of the Census, on the subject of the Correlation of the Financial and Physical Statistics of Cities, as to whether the time was not ripe for the League to undertake a similar definite formulation of principles and practices that should find expression in all systems of municipal administration. The proposition was favorably received and resolutions were passed directing the Executive Committee of the League immediately to take steps looking to the determination of the manner in which this work should be inaugurated and conducted.

Another important venture which the National Municipal League has decided to undertake is that of publishing a series of small volumes containing reprints of papers delivered at various times at the annual conventions of the League. The various papers relating to *City Government by Commission*, *The Initiative, Referendum and Recall*, *Municipal Accounting*, and *School Extension* will shortly be brought together in four small volumes, and others will follow at intervals. Each volume will have a special editor and the whole series will be under the supervision of the League's publication committee.

A volume of Short Ballot Charters will be issued shortly under the editorship of Professor C. A. Beard of Columbia University.